

In the claims:

1-48. Canceled

49. (previously presented) A mutant *B.mallei* strain with reduced virulence wherein said strain is altered in expression or function of BmaI3 encoded by the sequence identified in SEQ ID NO:2.

50. (previously presented) An avirulent *B.mallei* strain devoid of BmaI3 activity wherein said BmaI3 is encoded by the sequence identified in SEQ ID NO:2.

51. (previously presented) A *B.mallei* vaccine strain comprising *B.mallei* having a non-revertant mutation in *bmaI3* specified in SEQ ID NO:2, wherein said strain has reduced virulence and is devoid of BmaI3 activity.

52. (original) The *B. mallei* vaccine strain of claim 51 wherein said strain further contains another non-revertant loss-of-function mutation in a gene chosen from the group consisting of *bmaI3*, *bmaI1*, and *bmaR5*.

53. (previously presented) A vaccine comprising *B.mallei* vaccine strain according to claim 51 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

54. (previously presented) A vaccine comprising *B.mallei* vaccine strain according to claim 52 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

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55-58. Canceled.

59-60. Canceled.

61. (withdrawn) A method to elicit a *B. mallei* immune response in a mammal, said method comprising administering to said mammal a composition comprising the *B. mallei* vaccine strain of claim 51.

62-63. Canceled.

64-69. Canceled.